

CHILDREN'S GROUP HOME OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM



DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER



October 6, 2014

BACKGROUND

1998



The Board of Supervisors approved the recommendation of the Commission for Children and Families to establish the Office of the Ombudsman to be an independent and neutral problem-solver for youth placed in group homes by the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

The function was established in the Department of Auditor-Controller.

ROLE OF OMBUDSMAN

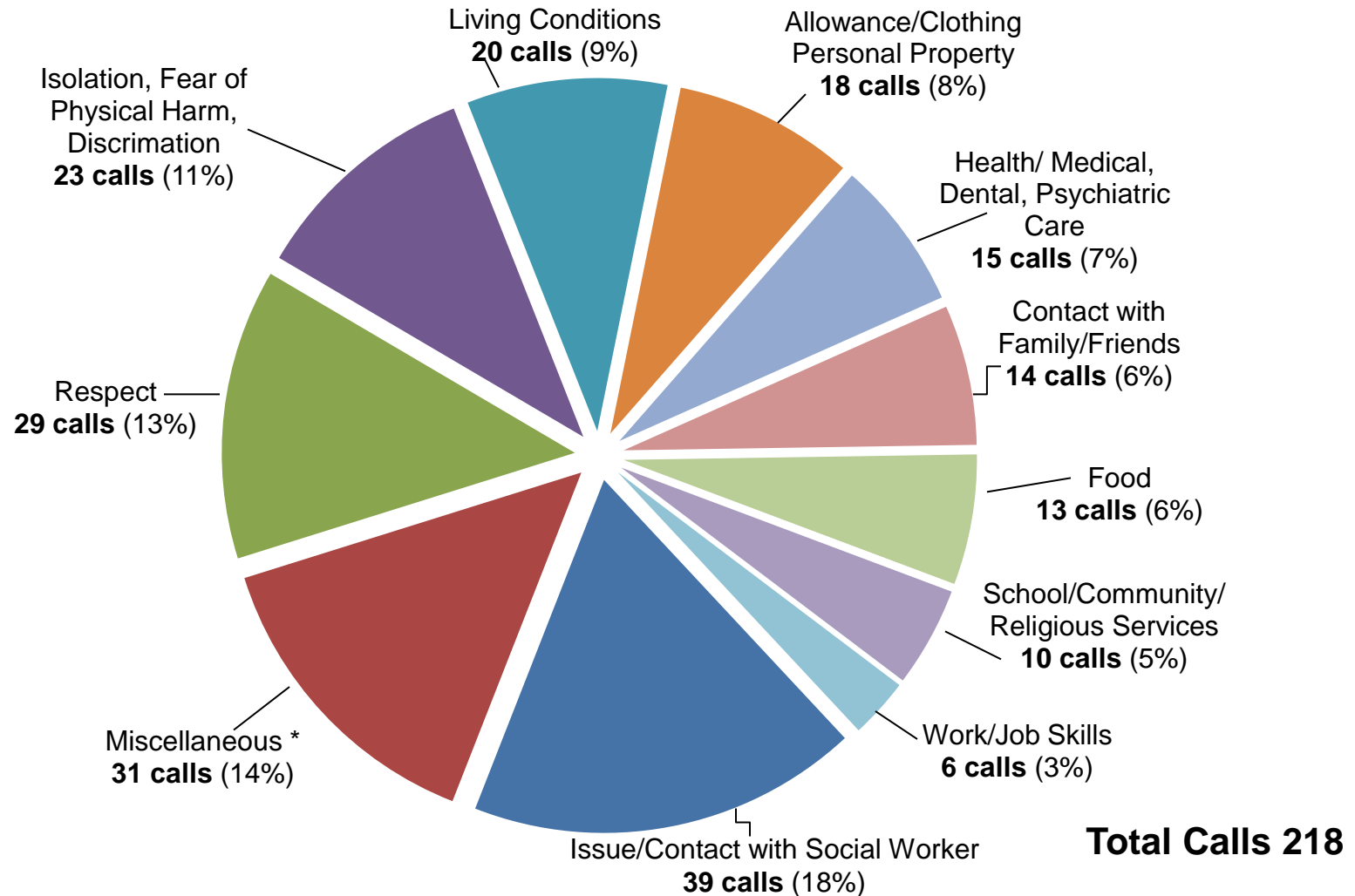
Offer assistance
Maintain a toll-free hotline number
Be independent and neutral
Understand and listen
Document and look into issue(s)
Seek and suggest solutions
Maintain confidentiality, to extent possible
Advocate for youths' personal rights
Negotiate a resolution

DATA AT-A-GLANCE*

Total Calls Received	354
Complaint Calls From or Relating to Group Homes	218
• General Information Calls	84
• Group Home General Information Calls (non-complaints)	52
Group Home Complaint Calls Answered/Resolved (within Ombudsman role)	218
Monthly Average of Calls Received	15
Number of Group Homes Calls Received <i>From or About</i>	43
Direct Removals as a Result of Complaint	0
Referrals to DCFS Out-of-Home Care Management	41
Outreach Visits Conducted (some group homes twice)	131
DCFS Children Provided Ombudsman Information (some children more than once due to placement movement)	620

***Data taken from 4 Ombudsman Semi-Annual Reports – Reporting Periods as follows:**
(1) July 1, 2012 – December 31, 2012; (2) January 1, 2013 – June 30, 2013;
(3) July 1, 2013 – December 31, 2013; and (4) January 1, 2014 – June 30, 2014.

TYPES OF COMPLAINT CALLS



*(e.g. Pregnancy/Child Care, Communication, Confidentiality, Hair Products, Internet Access, Placement, Privacy, Community Passes, and Court Dates)

GENERAL TRENDS

- Girls call more often than boys
- More calls are received in the afternoon than in the morning
- Call volume greater in the months of April, August & September
- Newly-placed children in group homes call frequently
- Calls tend to increase after outreach visits
- Girls are more vocal during outreach visits



HOW DO YOUTH KNOW WE EXIST?



OMBUDSMAN POSTERS

Posted in group homes

OUTREACH

Visits to group homes

GROUP HOME YOUTH

Word of mouth

HOW CAN YOUTH CONTACT US?

CALL US



Toll-Free Hotline Number: **1-888-445-1234**

EMAIL US



Designated Email Address: **afriend@auditor.lacounty.gov**

Website: **<http://grouphomeombudsman.lacounty.gov>**

TALK TO US IN PERSON



During Outreach Visits

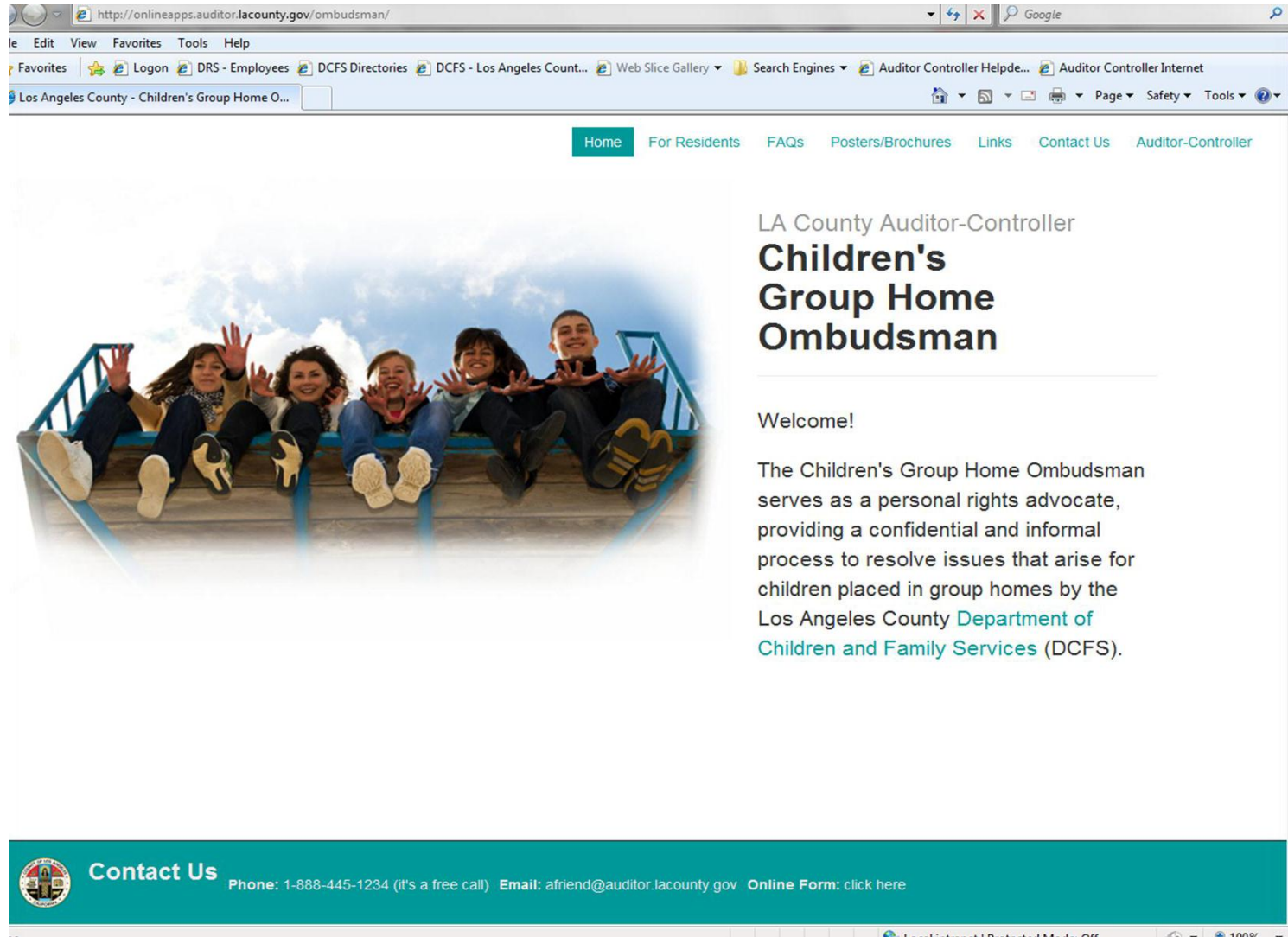
RECENT OMBUDSMAN ENHANCEMENTS

- **Updated Website**
- **New Posters**
- **Giveaways to Youth**
- **New Brochure**



UPDATED WEBSITE

<http://grouphomeombudsman.lacounty.gov>



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <http://onlineapps.auditor.lacounty.gov/ombudsman/>. The browser's address bar and menu bar are visible. The website's navigation bar includes links for Home, For Residents, FAQs, Posters/Brochures, Links, Contact Us, and Auditor-Controller. The main content area features a large image of five children sitting on a wooden bench outdoors, waving. To the right of the image, the text reads: "LA County Auditor-Controller Children's Group Home Ombudsman". Below this, a "Welcome!" message is followed by a paragraph describing the ombudsman's role: "The Children's Group Home Ombudsman serves as a personal rights advocate, providing a confidential and informal process to resolve issues that arise for children placed in group homes by the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)." The footer contains a "Contact Us" section with the phone number 1-888-445-1234, email address afriend@auditor.lacounty.gov, and a link to the online form.

http://onlineapps.auditor.lacounty.gov/ombudsman/

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Favorites Logon DRS - Employees DCFS Directories DCFS - Los Angeles Count... Web Slice Gallery Search Engines Auditor Controller Helpde... Auditor Controller Internet

Los Angeles County - Children's Group Home O...

Home For Residents FAQs Posters/Brochures Links Contact Us Auditor-Controller

LA County Auditor-Controller
**Children's
Group Home
Ombudsman**

Welcome!

The Children's Group Home Ombudsman serves as a personal rights advocate, providing a confidential and informal process to resolve issues that arise for children placed in group homes by the Los Angeles County [Department of Children and Family Services](#) (DCFS).

Contact Us Phone: 1-888-445-1234 (it's a free call) Email: afriend@auditor.lacounty.gov Online Form: [click here](#)

NEW POSTERS



**DO YOU HAVE A
GROUP HOME
PROBLEM
YOU CAN'T RESOLVE
ON YOUR OWN?**

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
CHILDREN'S GROUP HOME OMBUDSMAN
CALL: 888-445-1234 (IT'S A FREE CALL)
OR E-MAIL US: afriend@auditor.lacounty.gov

VISIT ONLINE: grouphomeombudsman.lacounty.gov

OTHER CONTACT NUMBERS

Child Protection Hotline (800) 540-4000 Attorney Information (213) 961-1700		Children's Social Worker Information (213) 961-6602 Probation Ombudsman (877) 822-3222
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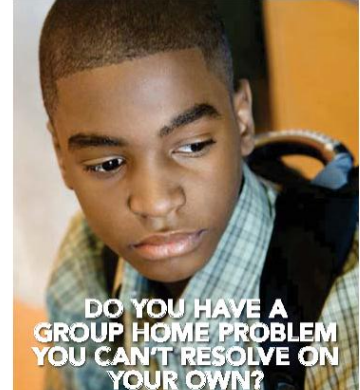
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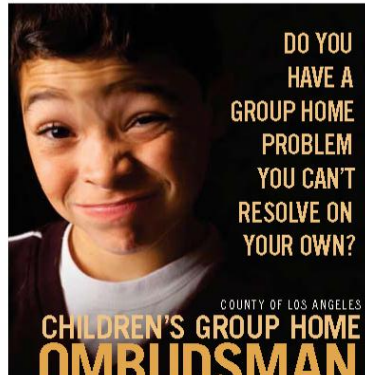
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GIVEAWAYS TO YOUTH



Flashlights

Calculators

NEW BROCHURE



County of Los Angeles
Children's
Group Home Ombudsman
1-888-445-1234



We are here for you while you are in Group Home placement. What we do when you call:

- Offer assistance
- Maintain a toll-free telephone number
- Be independent and neutral
- Understand and listen
- Document and look into issue(s)
- Seek and suggest solutions
- Maintain confidentiality, to extent possible
- Advocate for your personal rights
- Negotiate a resolution



It is the policy of the Ombudsman to maintain confidentiality of the information provided to the extent possible. Exceptions to this policy will be discussed with callers who will be informed that all reports of child endangerment, abuse and/or neglect must be reported by law.

Children's Group Home
Ombudsman

County of Los Angeles
Department of Auditor-Controller
500 West Temple Street, Room 515
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Phone: 1-888-445-1234

Email: afriend@auditor.lacounty.gov
Website: <http://grouphomeombudsman.lacounty.gov>

County of Los Angeles
Department of
Auditor-Controller
Children's Group Home
Ombudsman



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ON YOUR OWN?

1-888-445-1234
It's a FREE call!

Children's Group Home Ombudsman Program

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors established a Children's Group Home Ombudsman within the Department of Auditor-Controller. The Ombudsman's role is to be an independent advocate for children placed in group homes by the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

The Children's Group Home Ombudsman responsibilities include:

- Maintaining a toll free telephone number (1-888-445-1234) for DCFS group home residents to call from anywhere to express their concerns and complaints.
- Providing children information on their rights when placed in a group home.
- Providing a voice to speak and act on behalf of children residing in group homes.
- Creating an avenue for children to discuss their group home concerns without fear of retaliation from their providers and/or placement workers.
- Listening to concerns, gathering relevant information, documenting complaints.
- Suggesting resolutions and offering recommendations that are reasonable and feasible.
- Working together with the County and service providers to benefit group home residents.



We invite you to visit our website!
<http://grouphomeombudsman.lacounty.gov>

You have Personal Rights Relating to:

Allowance
Clothing/Personal Property
Contact
Food
Living Conditions
Health/Medical, Dental, Mental Health Care
Respect
School and Community
Social and Family Contact
Work and Job Skills



Children's Group Home
Ombudsman
1-888-445-1234



Other Phone Numbers

Attorney Information	1-323-980-1700
Child Protection Hotline (24 hours a day/7 days a week)	1-800-540-4000
Children's Court	1-323-526-6646
Community Care Licensing	1-323-981-3301
Independent Living Program (DCFS Youth Development Services)	1-877-694-5741
Probation Ombudsman	1-877-822-3222
Social Worker Information	1-323-351-5602
State Ombudsman Office (Foster Care Helpline)	1-877-846-1602

CONTACT INFORMATION

Michelle Day
Children's Group Home Ombudsman
Department of Auditor-Controller
500 W. Temple Street, Room 515
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Phone: 213-893-0551
Fax: 213-633-0991
Email: mday@auditor.lacounty.gov

